

April 2009

From Ulla Tørnæs, Minister for Development Cooperation of Denmark

During the last few years, I have had the opportunity to follow the World Bank's work on gender and development at closer level. Denmark was one of the first donor partners to support the Gender Action Plan: *Gender Equality as Smart Economics*, and we are co-financing the Action Plan's new *Adolescent Girls Initiative* in Liberia and Afghanistan. As I see this new initiative being launched, I remember the first conference in Berlin in early 2007, when I, along with colleagues from Germany, Norway and Sweden, turned to Danny Leipziger—Vice President responsible for Gender and Development—to pledge our support, while at the same time guaranteeing that we would monitor him and the Bank closely in its performance on women's economic empowerment. The stern message was: "We will be watching you."

The launch of the Bank's plan was timely. Denmark and other development partners were becoming increasingly concerned that progress towards the Third Millennium Development Goal, on gender equality and women's empowerment, was too slow, and that we would not reach the target by 2015. To remedy this, the Government of Denmark issued an *MDG3 Global Call to Action*, and launched a campaign with a series of activities designed to increase political priority and financial resources, thereby accelerating progress.

continued on page 2

The World Bank



Bringing the Private Sector On Board

By Amanda Ellis



From left to right: Finansbank Board President Hüsnü M. Özyeğin, Goldman Sachs President Gary Cohn, Carlson Chair Marylin Carlson Nelson, INSEAD Dean Franck J. Brown, Ernst & Young Global Vice Chairman Beth Brook at the launch of the Private Sector Leaders Forum.

World Bank Managing Director Ngozi N. Okonjo-Iweala formally launched a Private Sector Leaders Forum (PSLF) with IFC Executive Vice President Lars Thunell and World Bank Vice President Danny Leipziger at the World Economic Forum January 2009 summit in Davos, Switzerland. This innovative public-private partnership is the latest initiative of *Gender Equality as Smart Economics*, the World Bank Group's Gender Action Plan (GAP).

The PSLF is one of the Bank Group's President Robert B. Zoellick's six commitments on gender equality announced at the International Monetary Fund/World Bank Group 2008 Spring Meetings. Members include highly influential private sector leaders committed to creating economic opportu-

nities for women in key areas such as core business, strategic philanthropy, diversity and inclusion. These leaders have vowed to work together and with the Bank to share best practices and provide research and project-based evidence to support the business case for increasing women's opportunities in the private sector.

continued on page 7

Inside:

Private Sector Leaders Forum at Davos	1
GAP Funding At A Glance	2
Walking the Talk: Leipziger on GAP	3
Statistics for Effective Gender Programs	4
Gender Sensitization Training	5
Connecting to the Grid: Lao PDR	5
A Mine of Their Own	6
In Brief	7
Opening Doors for Papuan Women	8

From Ulla Tørnæs,
continued from page 1

The campaign has led to several victories, including a wave of new individual and organizational commitments on MDG3 from a wide range of persons like UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Nobel Prize Laureate Muhammad Yunus and Ruth Manorama from the National Federation of Dalit Women. In April last year, by accepting one of the MDG3 torches, World Bank President Robert Zoellick became an official champion of the MDG3 Global Coalition by making six new gender-related commitments on behalf of the Bank Group.

I am pleased to see progress on several of these commitments. In January this year, to give one example, the *World Economic Forum's* Annual Meeting in Davos for the first time featured a plenary session on the potential of adolescent girls in developing countries. The session followed up on our collaboration with the Government of Liberia, the Nike Foundation and the World Bank to launch a project for adolescent girls in Liberia, supporting young women's transition from schooling to paid jobs or entrepreneurship—which was one of the commitments President Zoellick made as he accepted the MDG3 torch. Similar activities are planned in four other low-income or post-conflict countries.

The MDG3 Global Call to Action and the Bank's *Gender Equality as Smart Economics* were created because we strongly believe that empowering women and girls is both the right thing and the smart thing to do. This is a message of increasing centrality in light of the global economic crisis and its implications for women and investments in the human capital of future generations and thus the potential for poverty reduction and growth.

I want to take this opportunity to thank and congratulate outgoing Vice President Danny Leipziger for his leadership on gender equality and women's empowerment, the creation of *Gender Equality as Smart Economics* and, indeed, our collaboration. I believe that our message to the World Bank and others should be that the Global MDG3 Coalition must now raise the level of ambition even higher and, building on Leipziger's efforts, make gender equality and women's empowerment central to all Bank operations.

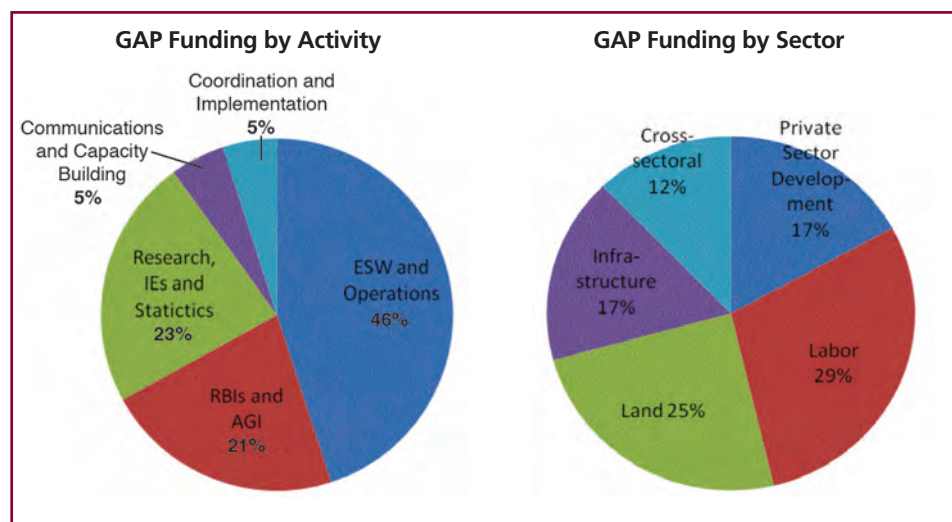
Ulla Tørnæs

For more information on the MDG3 Global Call to Action, visit <http://www.mdg3action.um.dk>

Gender Equality as Smart Economics: Funding At-A-Glance

In order to strengthen the gender focus of World Bank Group operations in the sectors of labor, land and agriculture, private sector development and infrastructure, the GAP has to date provided funding for 149 World Bank projects and analytical work in 73 countries through competitive calls for proposals. The GAP is also funding six Results-Based Initiatives (RBIs) in Liberia, Egypt, Kenya, the Mekong region (Cambodia and Lao PDR), and Peru. RBIs are local pilot interventions that seek new

ways to improve women's economic activities and productivity. With the Adolescent Girls Initiative (AGI) the Bank will engage girls and young women, ages 16 to 24, in a transition from school to quality work in five low-income or post-conflict countries, including Liberia, South Sudan, Nepal, Rwanda, and Afghanistan. An innovative private and public sector economic alliance has funded the AGI at US\$16 million to date. For more information about the AGI, visit <http://worldbank.org/gender>. 



IEs: Impact Evaluations; RBIs: Results Based Initiatives; AGI: Adolescent Girls Initiative; ESW: Economic and Sector Work

You May Request

For more information about *Gender Equality as Smart Economics*, contact:

Alexandra Brunais
Tel: (202) 458-5039
Fax: (202) 522-3237
abrunais@worldbank.org

Malcolm Ehrenpreis
Tel: (202) 458-5219
Fax: (202) 522-3237
mehrenpreis@worldbank.org



gender equality as smart economics
A World Bank Group Action Plan



THE WORLD BANK

This newsletter, *Gender Equality as Smart Economics* is published by the World Bank's Gender and Development Group twice a year, in print and on the web at www.worldbank.org/gender. EDITOR: Alexandra Brunais. Please send your comments, questions or request for materials to: abrunais@worldbank.org.

Walking the Talk on Gender Equality: Incentives Help Bank Redress Lagging Sectors

World Bank



Gender Equality as Smart Economics was the brainchild of Danny Leipziger, the World Bank's Vice President for the Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Network. As he readies himself to retire from the Bank mid-2009, Mr. Leipziger talks to us about the creation of the GAP, and his vision of the Bank's gender work going forward.

The creation of *Gender Equality as Smart Economics* in 2006 came about quite suddenly—can you explain the plan and its timing?

We hosted a conference here in 2006, and a group of our donor representatives, notably State-secretary Anne Stenhammer from Norway, challenged us in the plenary to do a better job at mainstreaming gender in the Bank's activities. I knew this was an issue we needed to address. Anne's comments acted as a trigger, and the following day, in the closing address of the conference, I—much to their surprise—asked Mayra Buvinic, Director of the Gender and Development Group, and her team, to report back within a hundred days with a proposal for a Bank-wide mainstreaming strategy.

Realistically, all the Bank's activities could not be tackled at once, so Mayra and her team proposed to focus the Gender Action Plan—*Gender Equality as Smart Economics*—on mainstreaming gender in the economic sectors, which tends to be widely recognized as the Bank's comparative advantage. This choice also aimed to redress a discrepancy: while the Bank's track record on integrating gender in the social sectors was very good, our record was much patchier in the economic sectors. I saw this approach in the context of revitalizing the Bank's work on economic growth and saw strong complementarities.

The plan was launched in February 2007 and the fact that it was strongly endorsed by the G8 during their summit meeting that year showed a clear need and strong will to improve women's economic empowerment in the developing world.

Everyone seems to agree that women's economic empowerment is crucial for development. Why is that?

Where to begin? Research shows that countries with greater gender equality tend to have lower poverty rates and that increases in women's productivity and earnings lower household poverty, as women tend to reinvest a much higher portion of their earnings into their families and communities than men do, spreading wealth beyond themselves.

Giving women access to credit is also good business because repayment rates are higher for women in all regions of the world. That's why most successful conditional cash transfer programs target women as the recipients. Another example is the fact that there is compelling evidence that agricultural productivity in sub-Saharan Africa could be raised by as much as 20 percent, simply by reallocating existing agricultural inputs more equally between men and women.

This year, the GAP also launched the Adolescent Girls Initiative (AGI) to help young women transition from school to work. When a young woman is employed, not only does her life improve, but she is also likely to reinvest about 90 percent of her earnings into her family's well-being, bettering the lives of those around her. She will also marry and have children later in life and have gained knowledge that allows her to keep her children healthy and educated. These immediate effects contribute to slowing population growth, which in turn impacts everything from health to climate change to the economy. Young women are a key factor in breaking intergenerational cycles of poverty.

This year, *Gender Equality as Smart Economics* has reached its midway point, what is your take on the results to date?

We have won a few good battles but the war is far from over. Substantive inroads have been made concerning the primary goal of the plan, which is to assist the Bank in integrating gender concerns into its projects and research in the sectors of labor, land and agriculture, private sector development and infrastructure. I think our innovative approach to mainstreaming through incentives, which is to provide matching funding for projects and research to include gender concerns, rather than through mandates, is proving quite successful. We are funding 149 activities in 73 countries, some of which are having a definite impact on the way the Bank does business. The plan has diversified into other initiatives, including the AGI and the Private Sector Leader's Forum (see page 1).

An immediate priority for the plan is to keep building the evidence base that shows that improving women's economic opportunities is indeed a smart economic decision. Gender mainstreaming should not be considered an obligation, but rather a high-return activity.

Also, the fact that President Zoellick chose last year to make six additional World Bank Group commitments to gender

continued on page 6

Danny Leipziger is the World Bank Vice President for the Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Group.

The Importance of Sex-Disaggregated Statistics for Effective Programs

By Shaida Badiee

The third Millennium Development Goal (MDG3) reflects the development community's strong commitment to promoting gender equality and empowering women. Success on MDG3 will contribute to poverty reduction and achieving other MDGs, such as universal primary education, lowering under-five mortality, improving maternal health, and lowering the likelihood of contracting HIV/AIDS.

There has been significant progress towards the completion of MDG3 in both education and health. The availability of sex-disaggregated statistics in these sectors has led to the development of policies and projects benefiting both men and women. However, the limited availability of statistics to measure women's economic empowerment has restricted the development community's ability to design effective programs.

A priority for the Development Data Group (DECDG) and the GAP is to improve knowledge and statistics on women's economic participation to accelerate the economic advancement of women. There are three key initiatives:

- improving the availability of gender indicators by centralizing data held by different entities,
- identifying gaps in knowledge and new indicators, and
- building national capacity to collect and analyze sex-disaggregated data.

Existing sex-disaggregated information is scattered across different agencies. To bring these data into integrated databases, GAP and DEC are working with the United Nations Statistics Division's Global Gender Statistics Program, the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics, the Luxembourg Income Study (LIS), and national statistical offices. This has led to a more comprehensive version of the World Bank *Gender-*

stats website. Continuously updated, this website provides a range of sex-disaggregated data at the country level. As a result of the partnership with LIS, a free access database called the key Gender Employment Indicators now provides detailed information on women's employment in developed and middle-income countries, a useful tool for benchmarking.




Through these and other partnerships, the GAP and DEC are identifying the gaps in sex-disaggregated data needed to design economic policies that benefit women and men. Some of the most urgently needed data include access to and use of credit, participation in informal employment and self-employment, levels of wages and earnings, and ownership of both productive and consumer assets (land, livestock, houses and other properties, credit and businesses). The GAP and DEC are currently drawing up methodologies and data collection strategies to capture these data.

GAP and DEC are also working to develop a data collection methodology to include gender indicators in large national surveys, such as the Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS), to provide a wide range of much needed information, comparable between countries and over time. Additionally, the GAP's funding of analytical work for women's economic empowerment has contributed to the creation of statistics on women in the productive sectors.

The third goal of the GAP-DEC partnership is to enhance the capacity to collect, report, analyze and use sex-disaggregated and gender-relevant data within the Bank, in national statistics offices, and on a global scale. It is hoped that a capacity building program, implemented by the World Bank Institute (WBI), will lead to an increased number of sex-disaggregated impact evaluations of Bank interventions.

The International Labor Organization and the United Nations Statistics Division are advancing initiatives to sensitize national statistics offices to the need for gender statistics. In partnership with the United Nations Development Program, and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, and with funding from the Development Grant Facility and the Marrakesh Action Plan for Statistics, the WBI, GAP, and DEC have launched a three-year Gender Sensitization Training seeking to build capacity in Eastern Europe and Central Asia through a training program on gender statistics, national training events on gender mainstreaming, and content and data sharing in areas such as poverty and labor markets (*see page 5*). Due to its high level of success, there are plans to work with the Economic Commission for Africa to expand the training program for developing capacity in countries.

These initiatives have begun to make progress towards sensitizing the development community and statistical offices to the need for sex-disaggregated statistics in the productive sectors to create better policies to economically empower women.

To access the Key Gender Employment Indicators and GenderStats, visit www.worldbank.org/gender. 

Shaida Badiee is Director of the Development Data Group (DECDG)

Gender Statistics Training in Eastern Europe and Central Asia

By **Gulnara A. Febres**

In 2007, the World Bank Institute, jointly with the World Bank Development Economics Group and Gender and Development Group, as well as the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, launched an innovative 3-year project on Gender Statistics for the ECA Region. The project is building the capacity of the National Statistical Offices (NSOs) in 13 ECA countries to improve the production, analysis, and dissemination of sex-disaggregated statistics for the purpose of social and economic analysis. The initiative is funded by the Development Grant Facility and the Marrakesh Action Plan for Statistics. Twenty regional and national activities were delivered in FY07- FY09.

One of the main achievements of the program, which ensures sustainable capacity after the program ends, is that participating NSOs took a strong ownership of the program, from design to implementation, and adhered to the Community of Practice (COP) built during the first year of the program activities. All the countries involved are developing follow-up objectives and taking further steps in advancing gender statistics at the national level. They have also started producing statistics that can be used for gender sensitive policy making, including designing new and improved surveys, developing action plans, and targeting decision-makers. For example:

- The Moldovan NSO is currently involved in developing gender relevant indicators for MDGs monitoring and has received funding from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency to support this effort.
- The Kazakh NSO developed a project proposal for a 3 year program aimed at studying gender and labor market issues, including informal employment, migration, correlation between women's education and employment, and access to assets.
- In Bosnia & Herzegovina, precise follow-up objectives were outlined, including reviewing the labor force survey by identifying areas where gender can be further incorporated into the methodology, preparing a questionnaire for 2009 where the gender component will be included in close cooperation with gender institutions in accordance with EU/Eurostat requirements, and including a gender component in questionnaires and surveys conducted by statistical institutions wherever possible.

There is a strong interest from other regions in the program and the project may be replicated in other countries in the future. The project has also resulted in the creation of a manual and a textbook on gender statistics, now used by leading Statistical Offices around the world, including Statistics Sweden.


For more information, visit <http://go.worldbank.org/F0GL4PFY50>. 

Gulnara A. Febres is Senior Operations Officer for the World Bank Institute

Update on Shining a Light on Women's Productivity in Lao PDR

By **Souridahak Sakonhninhom and Thalavanh Vongsonephet**

In the September 2008 issue, we reported on the difficulties poor, mostly women-headed, households in rural Laos PDR face to pay the initial fee to connect to the country's electricity grid. With funding from Gender Equality as Smart Economics, the Bank's EAP region devised a concessionary, interest-free credit plan to allow the households to borrow US\$80 to connect to the grid and repay the loan over three years from the savings incurred on traditional fuels, estimated to cost more than double a monthly electricity bill.

The implementation of the pilot project, Power to the Poor Project (P2P), co-financed by the World Bank and AusAid and implemented by Electricité du Laos (EDL), was launched in September 2008. Connection rates in the 20 pilot villages increased from 78% to 95% overall, and from 63% to 90% for female-headed households. The project is being rolled out to three other provinces and targets 1,800 more connections by the end of 2009 and 8,000 by end of 2010. Assuming an average of 5.2 members per family, this project has the potential to reach 50,000 direct beneficiaries by the end of 2010. Opportunities are being sought to replicate the model in other countries. GAP funding in the amount of US\$65,000 helped to leverage additional funding from AusAID in the amount of US\$500,000 to expand the rollout of electricity. 



In the participating village of Khaiydiow in the Champassak province, 78-year-old Mrs. Chanh, who looks after her six grandchildren, has electricity for the first time in her life. She hopes this will benefit her grandchildren's education and allow them to find a part-time paid activity in the evening.

Thalavanh Vongsonephet/World Bank

Souridahak Sakonhninhom and Thalavanh Vongsonephet are Program Assistants in the Vientiane, Laos, World Bank Office.

The Women of Lonmin

A Mine of Their Own

By Alex Burger and Benedicta Sepora

Maternity leave programs, sexual harassment awareness programs, accommodations for pregnant women and those who are breast-feeding. All this, plus women's bathrooms up to 1.3 kilometers below the earth's surface. This is all part of Lonmin—the world's third-largest primary platinum producing company, with over 25,000 employees and three facilities across South Africa. And where 25 percent of all new hires are women.

Lonmin is committed to its compliance with the South African Minerals and Development Legislation/Social Labor Plan, which requires all mining companies to integrate women into mining operations, with a set target of 10 percent women representation by 2010.

To achieve inclusiveness, Lonmin partnered with IFC. The first step was to conduct an audit to understand potential barriers to reaching the gender equality compliance target. The audit laid the groundwork for a 13-point "Women in Mining" initiative.

Following the initiative's recommendations, among other measures, 11 change houses and 197 underground sanitation facilities were built for women, with an additional 212 forthcoming. Lonmin and IFC also designed a sexual harassment awareness campaign and workshops to ensure that all employees are educated on workplace behavior that constitutes sexual harassment.

The results have exceeded expectations: since the beginning of the Lonmin-IFC partnership in November

2007, over 597 new positions have been filled by women who now constitute 6.2 percent of the workforce, a 42 percent increase from the end of FY07 to FY08. The women retention rate has also improved from a 15.5 percent turnover rate for women at the end of FY07 (13.5 percent for men) to 0.7 percent as of January 2009 (3.2 percent for men).

"For us to unlock and liberate the workplace of any gender bias, we needed to accelerate this program, and as such a new culture of tolerance and acceptance is beginning to emerge" says, Barnard Mokwena, Vice President: External Affairs. "Notably, we are dealing with an industry with more than 100 years of legacy, systems, behaviors and practices that were not designed to be women-friendly."

In October 2008, the IFC-Lonmin program was awarded a top prize in the socio-economic category of the Nedbank Green Mining Awards, which celebrates responsible mining. Going forward, the program plans to capture the impact of women's employment on the well-being of their households and the community at large. ☺

Alexander Burger is an IFC Program Manager and Benedicta Sepora is an IFC Operations Officer in Johannesburg, South Africa.

While the Lonmin project did not benefit from any funds under *Gender Equality as Smart Economics*, the GAP has been funding projects to better integrate gender issues in mining, such as "*Power to the Women: integrating gender concerns in energy, hydro and mining operations in Lao PDR.*"

Walking the Talk on Gender Equality

continued from page 3

equality shows that the Bank's top leadership believes in the Bank's gender work and its results. We must be doing something right.

How do you hope to see the Bank's gender work evolve, and what are the biggest challenges going forward?

I cannot emphasize how important it is for the work and the initiatives started under the GAP to continue beyond the plan, which is meant as a catalyzing force to institutionalize gender concerns into the Bank's work.

The biggest challenge the GAP currently faces is the global economic and financial crisis. This is hitting women hard and advances in women's economic oppor-

tunities may be compromised due to the increasing lack of resources. Young women will often be the first ones to be pulled out of school to lend a hand finding more resources for the household. Micro-lending institutions, which cater to women who often cannot obtain loans through commercial banks, are increasingly lacking capital and female employment will suffer as exports decline.

The Bank and the GAP program are facing an uphill task protecting social safety net expenditures and supporting the small and medium-sized enterprises and microfinance institutions that are crucial to women's well-being. Under the plan, some US\$3 million this year will be allocated to mainstreaming gender in the Bank's response to the crisis. But this is a drop in the bucket, so all who are committed to this agenda need to have our voices heard. ☺

Bringing the Private Sector on Board

continued from page 1

The PSLF comprises Boeing International, Carlson, CISCO Systems, Inc., Ernst & Young, Goldman Sachs, Grupo Inter-Quimica S.A., Heidrick & Struggles, Husnu Foundation, INSEAD, Nike Foundation, Norfund, McKinsey & Company, Monte Rio Power Corp., PriceWaterhouseCoopers, Shalakany Law Office (Egypt), Standard Chartered PLC, SunMedia, Sungjoo International, Unilever, and The Women Private Equity Fund.

At the official launch, chaired by Okonjo-Iweala, moderated by Leipziger and co-hosted by PriceWaterhouseCoopers and Standard Chartered Bank, members discussed the key role of the private sector in women's economic empowerment and emphasized the urgent need for coordinated efforts in the current global financial and economic crisis.

"We must ensure that women get the support they need to avoid setbacks during the ongoing economic crisis and to build the human capital of the next generation," said Okonjo-Iweala. "When women are given access to resources and opportunities, it brings benefits to families, communities and the next generation. So it's not only fair, it's also smart economics."

Members reported on progress and made additional commitments and suggestions for next steps around the themes of advocacy, analytics and action. INSEAD announced a partner-



Goldman Sachs

Fashion business owner Tuokpe Esisi from Nigeria said that prior to enrolling in Goldman Sachs' 10,000 Women program, "I had been running a business for several years, but not really doing business." Now, she is building on her talent and operational strengths, and taking critical steps to make her business truly scalable. As her business has begun to grow, Tuokpe has already invested a portion of her profits to provide tutors for the illiterate tailors she employs. This not only positions her and her enterprise for greater growth, but is also a perfect demonstration of the multiplier effect of investing in women.

ship with *Gender Equality as Smart Economics* to produce case studies of members' activities to facilitate further learning and cross-fertilization. McKinsey offered to lead an effort to develop a strategic framework/value chain model for women's economic empowerment. Ernst and Young announced new research on the role women can play in mitigating the current crisis. Standard Chartered and Cisco announced in kind commitments to the Adolescent Girls Initiative and the Sung-Joo Group offered its support. Heidrick and Struggles announced their commitment to ensure the inclusion of at least one woman on every Board

recruitment short list. Goldman Sachs announced their support of women's economic empowerment in Liberia as a result of their engagement in the PSLF, and, with Standard Chartered, will explore options to provide financing to women business owners graduating from the "10,000 Women" training program.

The next PSLF meeting will take place in Turkey on the margins of the World Bank Group/International Monetary Fund October 2009 Annual Meetings. 

Amanda Ellis is a Lead Gender Specialist with Gender Equality as Smart Economics.

In Brief

The PREM Gender and Development Group and the Development Economics Data Group, in partnership with the Luxembourg Income Study (LIS) have launched the **Key Gender Employment Indicators**, a set of sex-disaggregated indicators on employment in 27 OECD and middle income countries, with more countries to be added periodically. The indicators provide detailed data on gender earnings ratios, employment status by gender, percentage of male and female in specific industries—and are available in a query format, allowing users to create their own data tables, at www.worldbank.org/gender.

The World Bank-Agriculture and Rural Development Department, in partnership with FAO and IFAD, completed an **Expert Consultation on Gender in Agriculture** on March 16-17, 2009 as follow up to the Gender in Agriculture Sourcebook and a platform to consult stakeholders toward the development of a plan of action on gender in agriculture the three organizations. View details of the Consultation and provide your input at <http://ardblog.worldbank.org>.

The *Gender Equality as Smart Economics Two Year Progress Report* will be posted to www.worldbank.org/gender on April 14, 2009. 

Opening the Doors for Women's Participation

Interview with Yohana Baransano, Gender Specialist for the RESPEK project in Papua, Indonesia



Papuan National Yohana Baransano is a World Bank gender specialist working with RESPEK.

women who remain vastly underrepresented in decision-making processes.

With funding from *Gender Equality as Smart Economics*, the World Bank's East Asia Pacific Region hired Yohana Baransano, a Gender Specialist and Papuan national, to work with the Governor's Office to improve the opportunities for women to participate in RESPEK. Yohana's work has not only made important inroads, it has unlocked US\$1.8 million in funding from the Japan Social Development Fund to finance the Papuan Women's Empowerment Project (PAWE) to advance the involvement of women at all levels of decision-making.

As a Gender Specialist and Papuan National, what do you think are the biggest challenges facing women in Papua?

I think the biggest challenge, which affects men and women alike, is that Papua is undergoing a rapid change in its socio-political and economic environment, and there is a lack of action to help Papua's mixed population of 2 million to maintain their cultural and anthropological roots as this happens. Current development is not based on the needs, potentials and problems of the population, nor on the differences between tribal groups, geographical settings and anthropological characteristics. Papuans are not equipped to compete in this fast-changing socio-economic environment and indigenous communities are especially affected.

The challenges faced by women in particular include the fact that they are increasingly becoming infected with HIV/AIDS. Malaria and TB are also big problems. Many do not have the education to seek treatment and blood banks are not always reliable. Economically, very few Papuan women have access to credit to start income generating activities.

Can you describe the gender-oriented work you do within the RESPEK program?

It is good that community driven development programs such as RESPEK are now being run at the village level to address some, if not all, of the problems I just mentioned. The gender-oriented work I carry out within RESPEK is to identify the gender needs of over a thousand RESPEK development facilitators placed in 2727 sub-districts in Papua. I work to improve the gender approach of the pro-

gram, which is to ensure women's recommendations are included in creating the village proposals for development projects. I also work to improve the gender awareness of managers who supervise the facilitators: it is important to ensure that both male and female facilitators working in the villages receive support. Women do face discrimination in Papua and it has happened that women facilitators have encountered violence.

How is RESPEK improving the lives of women?

While the effects are not optimal yet, Papuan women now have a program that works towards ensuring their issues are placed on the table and considered. It is life-changing for many women to be able to participate fully in public meetings and have their proposals considered by the whole community.



Yohana and villagers of Timika, a community with no adequate water supplies.

Yosef Hadar/World Bank

How do you involve women's group and what role do they play?

Women's groups play a valuable role in organizing and mobilizing women at different levels, though their involvement is still low, especially in indigenous communities. Identifying the nature, capacity, and potentials of women's groups and trying to work with them to mobilize and organize the Papuan women scattered in the villages, in the highland, coastlines, islands and also those hidden within busy towns is very important. We hope that through PAWE, we can further explore their potential.

How will the Papuan Women's Empowerment Project (PAWE) differ from RESPEK?

I think the main difference is that while my work within RESPEK targets the whole of society with a focus on women, PAWE focuses exclusively on women and women's organizations as separate and specific target beneficiaries, and the whole of the community as an indirect beneficiary. Through PAWE, we hope to see the capacity of women improved sustainably at the village level and we hope that a number of women will gain skills. ☺